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School Committee Minutes 01/11/2011

Approved by the Arlington School Committee April 12, 2011

*The Arlington School Committee
Regular School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 11, 2011
7:30 p.m.*

** Meeting to be held in the School Committee Room – Sixth Floor
Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476*

Present: Mr. Joseph Curro, Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Vice Chair, Ms. Cindy Starks, Secretary, Mr. Thielman, Mr. Joseph Curran, Dr. Karsi Allison-Ampe and Mr. Judson Pierce.

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Dr. Wallis Raemer, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Linda Hansen, AEA Representative, Steve Pereira, AAA Representative, Student Representatives Mr. Rob Shea and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Absent: Mr. Mark Ryder Director of Special Education

*Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 9:02 p.m. and returned at 9:04 p.m.
Mr. Curro opened the meeting at 7:32 p.m.*

Dr. Bodie stated due to the snow storm their would be no school on Wednesday, January 12, 2011.

Mr. Curro introduced and welcomed Student Representative Robert Shea, AAA Representative and Metco Director Steve Pereira and AEA Representative and Reading Coach Linda Hanson.

Reflection, Remembrance and Recognition

Mr. Curro reflected on the recent shooting tragedies around the country and on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s. belief of non violence. Mr. Curro would like to give thanks for the community we live in and to keep Dr. King's legacy alive. Mr. Curro had a brief moment of silence for the recent tragies and for former Elementary Teacher Ms. Helen Mulcahy who was hired in 1940 and retired in 1979.

Recognitions tonight was for the exhibit on display in the School Committee Room on The Truth about Tobacco Products. Ms. Carlene Newell, Health/Resource Teacher explained that the students at the Ottoson Middle School were given a project to design their own creative messages that show the truth about tobacco. Ms. Newell gave thanks to a grant from the George L. and Elizabeth Sanborn foundation so Arlington Public Schools are able to educate the children about the dangers of tobacco and let them learn the Truth about the big Tobacco companies. The winners of the contest were Zach Dumay, Alison Everett, Paige Riley, and Baby Franchi.

Public Participation (Per File BEDH, Arlington School Committee Policy Manual)

- The length of the public participation segment shall normally be no more than 20 minutes.
- Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material.
- Extended discussion of issues during public participation is discouraged and may be deferred to a future

meeting with a scheduled agenda item.

- All remarks will be addressed through the chairperson of the meeting.

Mr. Len Kardon and Ms. Amy Speare are representing a new group called FYArlington, an Advocacy group that seeks to engage and inform the Arlington community on ways to improve Arlington Public Schools. Their website is www.FYArlington.org. The purpose is to attend meetings and post their finds to their website. They would like the Arlington School Committee to consider them a resource before any cuts are made.

Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Discussion

Dr. Bodie would like to give an overview of the Fiscal Year 2012. The numbers could change overtime as has been the case since the last discussion on December 14, 2010. The estimated Revenue is \$43,078,605. and the allocation from the town has changed and it's now \$37,917,790. This represents a 5% cut in State Aide, 10% cut in Grants, the reduction of Circuit Breaker, and the loss of one time Stimulus funding from last year.

The FY 12 Expense Assumptions are \$46,357,832. The primary assumptions in this number are that all FY 11 programming remains in place which is called Level Service Budget, with step and lane increase and with Special Education growth.

The FY 12 Budget Gap is now estimated at \$3.3 million. The FY 11 Revenue and Expense balanced budget is \$44,822,832 and next year the FY 12 Estimated Revenue is \$43,078,605 with the FY 12 Estimated Expenses to be \$46,357,832 which would be a \$1,535,000 increase needed to maintain those services, which gives us the \$3.3 million Budget Gap.

Dr. Bodie presented the guiding principles for the reductions and the impacts it will have on students. The Reductions of personnel will be at all levels, teaching, administration and support staff. 30 Elementary positions and 30 Middle and High School positions. Reduced social and emotional support and class offerings and special classes will be reduced.

Dr. Bodie did stress that the numbers are early numbers and will change. The budget process in Arlington is that the Arlington School Committee votes and submits a budget number to the Finance Committee in April so we need to move forward and to make plans.

Mr. Skidmore, Principal of Arlington High School first stated that he will be retiring at the end of the school year. Mr. Skidmore also spoke on the specific affects and ramifications of students with all the cuts the high school are proposed to make. Mr. Skidmore said the content of the materials that are taught will not change and they will deliver a good education but we should be aware that students will be in larger classes sizes and students will have less support. Some of the reductions considered are cutting 10 core content teachers, elimination of curriculum B classes, reduction of guidance and social work staffing, and reduction of in-house suspension staffing. The impacts of the reductions would be large class sizes, fewer sections of courses offered, more free periods, larger caseloads for guidance positions, loss of social and emotional support, more students given out of school suspensions.

The committee members discussed possible consolidations with other town resources for teaching certain classes.

Mr. Curro & Mr. Thielman thanked Mr. Skidmore for his seven years of service. Mr. Thielman pointed out the impact of previous cuts over the past year. Mr. Skidmore spoke on the possible impact on the Program of Studies Changes for 2011-2012 as a result of the Reductions of 12 – 16 positions. The budget issues need to be discussed first and Mr. Skidmore would like a vote on the Program Changes in March. These reductions will set Arlington Public Schools back a decade.

Dr. Bodie commented on the possibilities of the reductions for next year impacting the students who struggle and how these changes will have a negative impact on them and their ability to do well on MCAS.

Dr. Bodie also thanked Mr. Skidmore for his years of service. Dr. Bodie announced that she has the full support of the Administration Team and has hired Ms. Mary Villano as Interim Principal at Arlington High School next year. Dr. Bodie stressed that Ms. Villano will not apply for this position permanently, and that she will start a full search next fall. This action will assist with budget reductions in the administration area, scheduling, and with Ms. Villano's experience with NEASEC issues will continue to move the school forward. This would then leave Ms. Villano's current position as a cut and would not be replaced.

Ms. Heigham presented the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Timeline dated January 11, 2011 and asked that it be corrected from March 15th to March 8th.

Ms. Heigham explained the budget activities and the timeline and asked the committee to approve this as corrected. Ms. Heigham said the public forum would include a rescreening of the each Principal's presentation from Mr. Skidmore, Mr. Ruggere and the Elementary Principal's. At the public forum Ms. Heigham said one budget subcommittee member, administrator, secretary, and many School Committee members would be present.

Mr. Curro said the committee would need to make and approve four motions on the budget: 1) Budget Timeline, 2) Town appropriations budget, 3) Direct the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer to prepare a level service budget, and 4) to approve Special Meeting Dates.

Mr. Thielman moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Timeline with amendments of March 15th to March 8th, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Mr. Curran asked Ms. Heigham if she is confident with the dates of this timeline due to all the uncertainty of receiving budget information by the dates given. Ms. Heigham replied she does feel confident unless the state changes the 5% cut. Mr. Curro said the Budget Subcommittee met and discussed the dates and they work well with the Finance Committee and on March 15, 2011 the School Committee will finalize and adopt the FY 12 budget.

Ms. Heigham moved to acknowledge the Fiscal Year 2012 Allocation from the Town of \$37,917,790. seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 5-2

Roll Call: Mr. Pierce No, Dr. Ampe Yes, Mr. Curran No, Mr. Thielman Yes, Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes

Mr. Curran cannot support the budget number because it is not educationally sound.

Ms. Heigham said they are choosing to use the wording of acknowledge instead of approving the Towns Allocation because of the negative impact of this number and that no one wants to see this budget number crossing the table.

Mr. Curro said that the committee needed to make a motion to direct the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer to build two budgets. One based upon estimated revenues and a total bottom line of level service funding in the amount of \$41,374,606. Ms. Johnson explained that this would be the number the Town would need to appropriate the schools to maintain a level service budget. This would include all our budget increases as well as taking into account our reduction of in grants and one time funding.

Dr. Ampe asked Ms. Johnson if this number was to maintain FY 11 and not restoring to the FY 10 budget and Ms. Johnson replied yes. Mr. Thielman asked Ms. Johnson what was the purpose of this and she replied that the Town Manager asked for two budgets, one with the reductions and one to maintain services at the present level.

Mr. Curro entertained the following motion:

Ms. Heigham moved to Direct the Superintendent and the CFO to work up a proposed Fiscal Year 2012 Budget based upon a Town Appropriation \$41,374,606 seconded by Ms. Starks..

Voted: 5-2 Mr. Pierce and Mr. Curran voted No

Roll Call: Mr. Pierce No, Dr. Ampe Yes, Mr. Curran No, Mr. Thielman Yes, Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes

Mr. Curran confirmed to Ms. Johnson that this was level service budget and steps and lanes will also go up. Ms. Johnson replied that Special Education cost will go up and confirmed this will be a level service budget. Mr. Thielman asked when this was due to the Town Manager and to Ms. Johnson and Dr. Bodie said immediately but the budget details will be given to the full School Committee by February 15, 2011 as the timeline was voted. Mr. Pierce questioned the increase of 8% to Special Education and wondered why the increase if we continue to work hard to keep children in the district. Ms. Johnson stated that Special Education costs continue to go up and it is more costly to educate students out of district than in district, but even then costs grow. Ms. Johnson also reminded the committee that special education students can be added to the district at any time.

Mr. Thielman asked Mr. Curro if he wanted another motion on the budget and Mr. Curro suggested if the committee is

feeling uncomfortable we could certainly direct the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer to work up similar numbers based on numbers of a restoration of Fiscal Year 2010.

Dr. Bodie said she is currently working on building a budget that restores back to FY 10 high quality excellence budget and that the administrative team came up with a large list and how much.

Dr. Bodie is giving it to them anyway, but Ms. Johnson explained the difference between an excellence budget and a restoration of fiscal year 2010 budget

Ms. Heigham thanked the Budget Subcommittee and Mr. Dick Fanning, Ms. Mary Ronan, Ms. Johnson, Dr. Bodie, Dr. Ampe, and Mr. Thielman and appreciates all their contributions.

MCAS Report

Dr. Wallis Raemer presented the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Analysis 2010. Dr. Raemer thanked Ms. Leilanie D'Agostinio, Ms. Nadine Solomon and Reading Coaches with all their input. The scores include the scores of students in out-of-district placements, and are reported as Advanced and Proficient. The data Dr. Raemer presented on tonight was on District grade level performance, cohort performance subgroup results, and growth data.

Arlington is a high performing district and we achieve well above state averages and cohort group shows improvement from elementary grades to high school and 88 % of Arlington Public Schools rankings are in the top quarter in the state.

Recess 9:40 p.m. - 9:50 p.m.

FY11 Budget Update

Ms. Johnson presented all reports dated January 5, 2011 that were included in the School Committee packets: the Budget Tracking Report dated January 4, 2011, Grants report dated January 5, 2011, Revolving Expense Tracking report dated January 5, 2011, Revolving Revenue Tracking report dated January 4, 2011 and Position control report of December 21, 2010. Today Ms. Johnson presented two reports detailing information about Athletics dated January 11, 2011.

Mr. Curran asked Ms. Johnson about the status of the collections of over \$500,000 from Germaine Lawrence. Ms. Johnson said the lawyers continue to proceed with the collections and will update the committee each month. Dr. Ampe asked about the collections of revenue versus expenses for the winter athletics and Ms. Johnson said not enough winter collections was taken to report on that this month. Mr. Thielman suggested to Ms. Johnson to include a Budget Summary page in the next month reports. Mr. Curro suggested to seeing an opening balance on all revolving accounts. Ms. Johnson has agreed to all requests.

Dr. Bodie said the town manager has asked her to review possible mid year reductions. Dr. Bodie said her recommendation is to have no layoffs mid year but to save as much as the school can. Dr. Bodie will continue to work with the Town Manager to use any savings in Fiscal Year 11 in Fiscal year 2012.

Consent Agenda - All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

- Approval of Warrant # 11078 Total Warrant Amount \$ 325,301.66 dated December 7, 2010
- Approval of Warrant # 11083 Total Warrant Amount \$ 303,687.88 dated December 14, 2010
- Approval of Warrant # 11089 Total Warrant Amount \$ 350,175.17 dated December 28, 2010
- Approval of School Committee Minutes: ~ - November 9, 15, 23, 2010
- Approval of Italy Trip, April 2012
- Approval of Facilities Charge Adjustment for AHS Robotics Team
- Approval of Accounts Payable - Senior Account Clerk, Procurement Officer- Principal Account Clerk, Account Receivable Coordinator- Principal Account clerk
- Special School Committee Meeting Dates - February 15, 2011 and March 1, 2011

Ms. Heigham moved to approve the consent agenda as presented with the removal of approval of Facilities Charge adjustment for AHS Robotics Team, and the three job descriptions for the Business Office, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Ms. Starks moved for Approval of Facilities Charge Adjustment for AHS Robotics Team, seconded by Dr. Ampe.

Mr. Curran wants to know what the total charge would be, who is going to pay it and why the reduction in the fee.

Dr. Bodie said Lincoln Labs is sponsoring the Robotic Teams and had asked Arlington if they would host this event from 8:30 to 4:00 p.m. Once Mr. Weathers added up all the cost of all rental fees it was more than Lincoln Labs thought they needed to pay to use the space, therefore they are coming forward with the request of a waiver.

The rental charges currently is \$2,200.00 and the Robotics Team is asking for 50% reduction to this fee, but understand all custodial charges will be charged.

Mr. Curran stressed the importance of these programs but at this time with all the fees being asked from other parents and that parents are paying to go watch their children participate in sports he cannot support this waiver.

Mr. Curran said he is not happy that this was on the Consent Agenda and wants transparency.

Ms. Heigham asked if other school sponsored clubs, such as wrestling pay to use our building on the weekends and Dr. Bodie and Ms. Johnson replied no.

Ms. Starks explained the cost of the custodians and facility charges. Dr. Bodie suggested cutting the charge to 50% of the facilities charge.

Dr. Ampe agrees with Mr. Curran that this should not be in the Consent Agenda and deserves discussion. She would support this but has a personal connection with Lincoln Labs and would have to abstain.

Mr. Pierce cannot support because they discussed the current facility waiver process and with the economy might not be the time to do this. The Policy and Procedures Subcommittee is in the process of reviewing the current facility waiver process.

Mr. Thielman will be supporting the motion and said Mr. Larry Weathers is looking for reduction of 50% facilities charge.

Mr. Curro apologized for adding the item to the Consent Agenda. Mr. Curro can see this question from both sides and will abstain until the policy is changed and pointed out he endorsed waiving facilities fees for Pop Warner.

Ms. Heigham reiterated that it is a school- sponsored club.

Dr. Bodie said this is a school- sponsored Robotics Team and we don't charge our students in the Math club and said this is our Science Club and our Science Teachers will be there.

Mr. Curro moved to amend the motion to reduce facilities charge to a 25% discount instead of 50%. No one seconded.

Ms. Heigham understands they are looking for a cap instead of a percentage of a waiver and the facilities charge. Dr. Bodie said they were looking to rent the space for 12 hours 1 classroom, red gym, and cafeteria. Ms. Johnson suggested charging them for 9 hours of usage instead of 12 hours.

Ms. Starks withdrew the motion after the committee discussed putting a cap on the facilities charge.

Ms. Starks moved that the Arlington School Committee approve the request from the Arlington High School Robotics Team only be for nine hours of use, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 5-1-1, Mr. Curran voted No, Dr. Ampe abstained.

Ms. Heigham moved to end debate on the facility charge motion, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Mr. Curro asked Ms. Johnson to explain why three job descriptions from the Business Office needed approval. Ms. Johnson explained the the Business Office a reorganization back in July and this is the formal paper-work catching up, and does not represent any pay increases. The Accounts Receivable job is the collection of fees and will now be moved into senior list from general clerks to sublist of accounting clerks.

Mr. Curran asked if this was a recommendation of MASBO and Ms. Johnson said no, they were already in place. Ms. Heigham said MASBO did make a recommendation to update job descriptions. Ms. Johnson said she misunderstood Mr. Curran's question. Mr. Curran has nothing to compare the job descriptions with and requested previous job descriptions and is not happy that this was on the Consent Agenda. Ms. Heigham questioned the work hours. Ms. Johnson said the 35 hours are standard and the pay is standard too.

Mr. Curro noted that these job descriptions were added after he had approved the Consent Agenda and suggested that we table these until we have the previous job descriptions to compare them.

Dr. Bodie said procedurally we have to post these job descriptions too.

Dr. Ampe asked if we are moving a person from one union to another and if the union was notified. Ms. Johnson said no its the same union but the Accounts Receivable position will be moved from the seniority list of a General Clerk list and onto the Accounting clerk list and that she spoke with Ms. Albertazzi and not to the Union President, Mr. Ron Colosi but he was notified.

Ms. Heigham moved that we table the three job descriptions from the Business Office to our next School Committee meeting and at which point we want to see the previous job descriptions and have the union response to the new job descriptions, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted: 7-0

Secretary Report

Ms. Starks reported on all correspondence received:

- email from a parent wanting more specifics about cuts related to next years budget
- email from a parent confused about who to pay athletic fees to
- draft minutes for regular school committee meetings on 11/9/2010, 11/23/2010, and special school committee meeting on 11/15/2010
 - copy of the request for approval of an Italian trip during April break 2011
 - waiver request for the fees to host the robotics competition at AHS on Sunday, January 16, 2011
- copies of job descriptions for 3 immediate job openings with the APS for an accounts payable senior account clerk, procurement officer principal account clerk, and accounts receivable coordinator principal account clerk
 - information email about gas smell outside of Peirce school
- copy of a document titled "Race to the Top The Massachusetts Plan" put out by the Ma Dept. of Elem & Sec. Education
- copy of a letter to Ms. Johnson regarding incoming grant money from the MLK Jr. Birthday Observance Committee
- copy of an invitation to Superintendent Bodie about an upcoming METCO legislative coffee with Jay Kaufman and other legislators in METCO districts
- information & invitation to the AHS Music Technology multimedia concert of new student works called Sonic Voyages 2 to be held on Wednesday, January 12, 2011 (tomorrow night)
 - copy of the Brackett school newsletter dated January 3, 2011
- copy of a guest editorial submitted and printed in the Arlington Advocate by Chairman Curro
- copy of a reminder about the MLK Jr. birthday celebration and observation to be held on Monday, January 17 (MLK Day) at 6pm at town hall
- copy of the registration to the MASC academy for school leadership to be held on Saturday, January 22, 2011
- save the date information for the Metco Evening of champions recognition dinner dance to be held in Quincy on Friday, April 1, 2011 at the Quincy Marriot Ballroom
 - email from Ron Colosi outlining new teacher job actions for the AEA membership for the new year
- copy of the comments made to the Mass. Secretary of education by chairman Curro and a thank you from Sean for having spoken to the secretary right before the winter break
 - copies of letters sent to our legislators from Chairman Curro about our funding shortage
 - copy of the enrollment numbers for the APS as of January 1, 2011
- letters to all town employees and all members of boards and commissions regarding state ethics laws
 - email about the 5-2-1 program at the Ottoson Middle School
 - email about AEA representatives at school committee meetings
- emails concerning questions for MASBO regarding the financial operations review

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bodie has asked the Chair to appoint someone to the Selection Committee for the Owner's Project Manager for the Green Repair Program for the M. Norcross Stratton Elementary School.

Mr. Curro recommended to appoint Mr. Thielman after he responded to Mr. Curro's request to this committee.

Ms. Heigham moved to appoint Mr. Thielman as the Arlington School Committee designee to the Selection Committee for the Owner's Project Manager for the Green Repair Program for the Stratton Elementary School, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted: 7-0

Dr. Bodie announced the Robotics Team competition at Arlington High School this Sunday, January 16, 2011 and the AEF fundraiser and that Warrant Articles have been extended to January 21, 2011. Dr. Bodie would like to acknowledge the hard work of all the School Nurses who have seen many many students since September.

After a brief discussion Mr. Curro wanted the motion to appoint Mr. Thielman stated as required by Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Ms. Heigham moved that the School Committee of the Arlington Public Schools names Mr. Jeffrey Thielman as its designee on the Selection Committee for the Owner's Project Manager for the Green Repair Program for the M. Norcross Stratton Elementary School, as required by the Massachusetts School building Authority, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted: 7-0

Mr. Steve Pereira, AAA Representative asked the School Committee members to attend the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner where Arlington High School student Cameron Perrone will be honored.

Roundtable

Mr. Pierce presented two policies as a First Reading, BE – School Committee Meetings and BEA – Regular School Committee Meetings.

The committee members made additional suggestions to the policies. Mr. Curran likes the meetings on Tuesday; Mr. Curro suggested some discretion for the chair on starting meetings to hear grievances and to move the start time of Special Meetings.

Ms. Heigham moved the 11 o'clock rule to 11:05 p.m., seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted: 7-0

Mr. Curran moved to Support Warrant Article Submission from the Athletic Advisory Committee to see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaws to allow the temporary display of advertising/sponsorship signs at Peirce Field or take any related action thereto, seconded by Mr. Thielman.

Voted: 7-0

Mr. Curran thanked Mr. Curro for answering his questions with the MASBO report.

Mr. Thielman announced the next District Accountability/Curriculum Instruction meeting will be held January 24, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the School Committee Room.

Mr. Curro thanked Ms. Starks for driving to Worcester to attend the meeting with him.

Adjournment

Ms. Heigham moved to adjourn at 11:00 p.m., seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen M. Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee/cs/jc*